1. **TITLE:** **Diverse Localised Religious Practices and Beliefs of Chinese Communities in Southeast Asia**
2. **CONVENER:**

Name: Dr. TAN Ai Boay,

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1. **CHOSEN FORMAT: Panel**

This is a one-session panel, with a convenor, also works as chair, 4 presenters, and 2 discussants. Lin Yu-sheng will be the discussant for Tan’s and Lei's presentations., and Tan Ai Boay will be the discussant of Yang's and Lin's presentations**.**

1. **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PANEL:**

 Southeast Asia has incredibly rich and diverse tapestry of religions and ethnic groups. Due to geographical factors and other reasons, there has been a huge influx of Chinese migrants into Nanyang (Southeast Asia) since the mid-19th century. They not only brought their native religious practices to this area but also amalgamated these practices with the indigenous beliefs, forming diverse but unique religious synthesis. In this panel, we are going to discuss these different localised religious practices and beliefs of Chinese communities in Southeast Asia. Tan Ai Boay discusses the deification of Chinese historical figures in Malaya since the 1880s. Her research aims to identify patterns or rules within the deification process. Yang Li studies the influence of the Confucianism movement in China on Southeast Asia, with a specific focus on Singapore as a case study. Despite the Confucianism movement originating from China, her paper also delves into the discussion of localisation in Singapore. Lin Yu Sheng's research focus on Phuket, Thailand. He compares the tutelary worship of Sino-Thais, Thai state, and the indigenous groups, and examines the syncretism and differences among these groups. Lei Bo studies the film 'The Story of Southern Islet' to explore the belief in land spirits at the boundary of Malaysia and Thailand. In summary, this panel focus on the amendment and hybridization of religious practices and beliefs among the Chinese communities and ethnic groups in Southeast Asia.

1. **SINGLE SESSION (1 x 90 min.):**

**1st presenter:**

**TAN Ai Boay,** Assoc. Prof., Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman,**tanab@utar.edu.my**

**Title: The Deification of Chinese Historical Figure in Malaysia**

**Abstract:** Malaysia is a multi-ethnic and multireligious country. The Chinese, constituting the second largest ethnic group, have not only integrated local religious elements into their beliefs, but have also 'transformed' historical figures into deities. Usually, figures historically regarded as martyrs are revered as deity within the Chinese community, such as Soo Datuk, Liu Shan Bang, and Sheng Ming Li. This research attempts to delve into the process of deification within the Malaysian Chinese community. Through a blend of ethnographic studies and archival research, the paper aims to analyze both the similarities and differences in the deification process.

**2nd presenter:**

**YANG Li,** Assoc. Researcher, Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences,**215858636@qq.com**

**Title:** **The Longitudinal Analysis and Localization Studies of Confucius Worship in Singapore**

**Abstract:** In 1898, Kang Youwei attempted to establish Confucianism as the State Religion in China. Although Kang's reform efforts failed, the influence of constructing Confucian temples extended overseas, especially in Singapore and Malaya. Scholars widely recognize the period from 1899 to 1911 as a revival of Confucianism Movement in Singapore. Intellectuals educated in English, such as Lim Boon Kheng, played a significant role in promoting this cultural identity movement. This study primarily analyzes the Confucius worship ceremonies of that time, aiming to explore whether they contain elements of localization.

**3rd presenter:**

**LIN Yu Sheng**, Assoc Researcher, Academia Sinica**,** **linlh1983@gmail.com**

**TITLE: *To:* The Diverse Tutelary Worship of Different Groups in Phuket, Thailand**

**Abstract:** *To* is a kind of tutelary spirit popular in the southern Thailand. They are usually in the form of Muslim elders, but worshipped by non-Muslim prayers from different ethnic groups. These different ethnic groups worship *To* in various ways. In this research, I would like to compare three different ways of the To worship by different groups, which are Thai and Sino-Thai prayers, Thai local governments, and the Urak Lawoi sea peoples. This research aims to comprehend the hybridized interactions of different ethnic groups and the influences of the state in the multi-cultural Southeast Asia.

**4th presenter:**

**LEI Bo,** Ph.D Candidate, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman**,** **china.leibo@1utar.my**

**Title: Exploring the Land Spirit at the Boundary: A Cinematic Analysis** **of 'The Story of Southern Islet'**

**Abstract:** The movie ‘Story of Southern Islet’ tell the mystery legend in Gunung Keriang (Mount Keriang) village, which located in northern Kedah, Malaysia, not far from the boundary of Thailand. This is the true story adapted from the director, Chong Keat Aun’s father adventure. In 2020, this movie brought the Golden Horse Award for Best New Director to Chong. The movie tells a story of Cheong, a Malaysia Chinese who falling sick after spelled by someone. In the journey searching for remedy to cure, Cheong’s wife Yan encounter with mystical and paranormal event. The movie demonstrates the witchcraft and folk belief of the ethnic Chinese, Malay and even Siam (Thailand). The purpose of the paper is to highlight the land spirit, likes *semangat padi* (rice field spirit) and *Datuk Kerama*t of *Datuk Gong* in the movie. This movie demonstrated culture inherent and synthetics of the ethnic Chinese in the boundary of Malaysia and Thailand. The research attempted to analysis the land spirit image and symbolic to the nation building.

**(6) Discussants: Dr. TAN Ai Boay and Dr. LIN Yu Sheng**